THE DEFORMED FORME OF A FORMALL PROFESSION:

OR,

The deſcription of a true and falſe Chriſtian, either excuſing, or accuſing him, for his pious, or pretended converſation:

Shewing that there is a powerfull *godlineſſe* neceſſary to ſalvation, and that many have the *forme*, but not the *power* thereof.

In handling whereof,

These three things are plainly and powerfully explained and applyed.
1. *What* godlineſſe *is.*
2. *What the* power *of it is.*
3. *What be the reaſons why ſome have but the* forme *thereof: together with the meanes and marks, both how to attaine, and to try our ſelves whether we have the* power *thereof or not.*

By that late faithfull and worthy Miniſter of Ieſus Chriſt, JOHN PRESTON, Doctor in Divinity, Chaplaine in Ordinary to his Majeſtie, Maſter of Emanuell Colledge in *Cambridge*, and ſometimes Preacher of Lincolnes Inne.

Not every one that ſaith unto me, Lord, Lord, ſhall enter into the kingdome of Heaven, but hee that doth the will of my Father which is in Heaven, Math. 7. 21.

Pure religion, and undefiled before God and the Father, is this, to viſit the fatherleſſe and widowes in their afflictions, and to keepe himſelfe unſpotted of the world, James 1. 27.

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UMI

THE DEFORMED FORME OF A FORMALL PROFESSION.

2 TIMOTHIE. 3. 5.

Having a forme of godlineſſe, but denying the power thereof.

OUR Apoſtle S. *Paul* doth in theſe words give us a part of a deſcription of wicked men in the latter times: & he bringeth them in by way of prevention or objection, or anſwer to an objection, as if ſome ſhould wonder that there ſhould be ſuch kinde of perſons in the Church, as hee in the former verſes had deſcribed; *Covetous, boaſters, proud, blaſphemers, diſobedient to parents, unthankfull, unholy, &c.* doe theſe live as the Church do's? Doe theſe retaine the Sacraments, and the like? Yes, faith

ſaith the Apoſtle, *they doe, wee cannot denie it; only this, They have a forme of godlineſſe, but &c.* So that the point of doctrine ariſing from hence, doth plainly appeare even at the firſt ſight to be this, *viz.* That *there is a powerfull godlineſſe neceſſary to ſalvation, and that many have but the* forme, *not the* power *thereof.*

Now, there be three things to be explained in opening of this doctrine, to ſhew
1. What *godlineſſe* is.
2. What the *power* thereof is.
3. The reaſons why many have no more but the *form* therof.

For the firſt, that you may the better conceive what *Godlineſſe* is, I will firſt ſhew you what it is not.

What *godlineſſe* is not.

Firſt then, it is not bare nature; but that *godlineſſe* which God requireth of all men, is more then ſo. God indeed hath commanded nature, yea even corrupt nature, to bring forth many fruits of *godlineſſe*; as much abſtinence from pleaſure, much patience, much temperance, and ſuch like, which are all very beautifull in their owne Spheres: but becauſe they come not from God, nor his Spirit of ſanctification, or becauſe they have no reſpect of God, therefore they are not *godlineſſe*, neither doth God regard them.

Secondly, it is not the act of religion proceeding from ſelfe-love, though offered to God, in regard that men ſee that God is the governour of the world, that he hath the keyes of heaven and earth, and men may doe much to God for ſuch reſpects, uſing

uſing him as a bridge to get to heaven by, making themſelves their utmoſt ends: and therefore this is not *godlineſſe*: but what is it then, you will ſay?

What *godlineſſe* is.

Thirdly, it is a divine grace infuſed into the ſoule by God, whereby a man followes God, loves him, magnifies him, ſets him up in his heart above all, and manifeſteth this in his life, and the whole courſe of it, doing all for him and to him: and it is thus wrought; When the creature comes to ſee no beauty in himſelfe, and no help in himſelfe: and ſith God is full of all beauty, and all excellencie, and all power, able to anſwer our deſires in every thing; when he comes to ſee and conſider this, then he begins to ſet up God in his heart; as the Jvy having no root, cleaves faſter to the tree, ſo likewiſe doth he only to God, ſeeing that hee cannot ſubſiſt of himſelfe; and when hee comes to ſee that hee depends on him for all things, he will doe all things for him, becauſe all are from him: whereas before, ſeeing ſomething in himſelfe, hee magnified himſelfe, and ſo withdrew himſelfe and his heart from God. And ſo I come to the next particular, *viz.*

What is meant by the *power* of godlineſſe.

What is meant by the *power* of godlineſſe: and for that, you ſhall know there is a godlineſſe, which is not only in words and complements, but in deed and truth; for it not only puts upon a man a waſhie colour of perfection, but dyes his heart in graine in holineſſe; and it differs from the other in five things.

First, It is done in the *Power*, when it is not the bare picture, where there are not only the outward

Five differences betweene the *forme* and *power* of godlineſſe.

lineaments of nature, but when there is life in it; and that you ſhall know when a man needs not to be called on to good duties, but there is a naturall principle of life in him, wherby he doth them with facility and conſtancie, as naturall actions of life: when likewiſe he doth grow in them; for where there is life, there is alſo growth; and when hee doth likewiſe deſire that which may feed it, as the meanes which may ſtrengthen him in the doing of it; as if a man have life, he deſireth meat and ſleep; and when as there is life, then the works that come from a man, are not dead works, and then you have the power of godlineſſe, it is not a faſhion only.

Secondly, It is not true, but counterfeit, when it is like the true, but not the ſame, but wants ſome particular property that is to be found in the true; as that which is counterfeit Balſame, which is like the true, but wants the power of healing; and ſo likewiſe a counterfeit drug, and a counterfeit jewel, which wants that property which the true hath: and the want of this you ſhall finde in the uſe, and in the wearing: As a rotten bow is found to be rotten when the arrow is drawne to the head; ſo if a mans *godlineſs* be counterfeit, and hee unſound, it will be diſcovered in the wearing, or in ſome particular caſe, when he is put to it, or tried. A Jeweller will finde out the property of a Jewell, but an ordinary man cannnot doe it, but by uſe & the wearing. To inſtance in ſome particular parts of *godlineſs*; the love of God, if it be true, hath theſe properties, that a man loves the brethren; for how canſt thou love an immateriall holineſſe in God, if thou loveſt not

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that holineſſe which is ſtampt upon the creature like thy ſelfe: ſo likewiſe rectitude and uprightneſſe of heart; try it by this property, which our Saviour Chriſt makes of it, *gracious ſpeeches*; Chriſt ſaith, that that which is predominant in the heart, the mouth will be full of: ſo for keeping of the commandements, if in truth they have this property, that they be not grievous, they will doe them with a naturall delight, and inward willingneſſe: ſo for taking of Chriſt by faith, every man beleeveth he doth ſo, but our Saviour Chriſt trieth it by this, *Goe ſell all that thou haſt, and thou ſhalt have treaſure in heaven*: & ſo mayeſt thou try thy ſelf when thou art put to it by loſſe of goods, or credit, or otherwiſe.

Thirdly, It is in the *power*, when it is ſtrong and not weake, when a man hath power and ſtrength in doing good duties: and hereby many are diſcovered, who have good purpoſes only, which though they be hearty in them for a time, yet they want power and ſtrength; and this is the caſe of many which be in the Church, who though they have the knowledge of the word of God, and approve the truth in their conſciences, deſiring to be ſaved by the practiſe of it, and ſo take up many good purpoſes, which yet come to nothing, becauſe they want power and ſtrength. Conſider therefore if thou haſt power and ſtrength to performe thy purpoſes, and then thou haſt the *power* of godlineſſe; but not elſe. Many will ſay, I am but fleſh and blood, and what will you have me to doe? now here wants the power, as you may ſee in the fifth Chapter of *Deuteronomy*, from the 7. verſe

to the 29, the people there ſaid to *Moſes*, *That what the Lord ſhould ſpeake to him, they would doe it*; they ſaid then what they thought, and what they meant and minded, and the Lord ſaith of them, *O that there were ſuch an heart in them, that they would feare me, and keepe my commandements, &c.* They wanted the *power*, though they had good purpoſes.

Fourthly, If thou wouldeſt know whether thy godlineſſe be in the *power* or no, ſee whether thou haſt not only the ſhaddow of it, but the ſubſtance; for there is a ſhaddow with the ſubſtance: as if thou pray, there is a formall doing of it, which is as the ſhaddow; but to pray in the holy Ghoſt, not in the voyce of thy owne ſpirit, but out of Gods owne ſpirit; not out of memory or wit, but out of thy heart, and that an heart ſanctified by the Spirit of adoption; this is the ſubſtance. And ſo to heare for knowledge onely, that is the ſhaddow; but to heare for practiſe, that is the ſubſtance: And ſo againe, for us to preach the Goſpel, to doe it becauſe *neceſſity it laid upon us*, and there's *a woe denounced againſt us if we doe it not*, as ſaith our Apoſtle of himſelfe, there is the ſhaddow; *But to preach with power, and authority, and not as the Scribes and Phariſes, with the enticing words of mans wiſedome*, this is the ſubſtance.

Fifthly and finally, It is in the *power* when a man goeth thorough the work: a thing is ſaid to be in the *power* when it is effectuall, when a man bringeth it to an end, and doth it not by halves: ſo ſome begin indeed, but then they leave the work in the rudiments: but if a man have the power, hee will break

break through all difficulties, hee will leape over all till he hath *wrought out his ſalvation with feare and trembling.*

And thus having diſpatcht the *two* former particulars, I haſten to the *third* and laſt of the premiſes, *viz.* The reaſons why ſome have but the *forme*, and not the *power*: and they are eſpecially theſe.

Reaſons why many men have but the forme.

Firſt, becauſe the forme is moſt eaſie, but the *power* is a matter of more difficulty: for the former it doth not call upon a man to cut off his *right hand*, to pluck out his *right eye*, and to *denie himſelfe* in things neareſt and deareſt unto him, as the *power* doth; for it requires a man ſhould take paines in good duties, and goe through them, not to omit or ſlight the leaſt of them in the leaſt meaſure that may be, or to lie in knowne ſinnes; and farther, it requires a man ſhould doe this from day to day, and that when it croſſes the fleſh moſt: this is an hard ſaying, and cauſed many that they would no longer abide with Chriſt; they were willing to obey the *forme*, but not the *power*.

Secondly, becauſe this *power* breeds hatred and oppoſition in the world, and the world will croſſe it againe: now then, when a man may retaine the forme, and hold in with the world, a man may be of the world ſtill, and the world will love his own: whereas the *power* makes men *Antipodes* to all the world; this makes many care for no more but the forme. Fit for this purpoſe is that place, *Wiſd.* 2. 12. where the ungodly ſay of the righteous on this wiſe. *Theſe mens lives are contrary to ours, and their doings reprove our thoughts, therefore let us oppreſſe them:*

and Christ tells us we must look for no other, saying, *we shall be hated of all men for his names sake*; and it is no easie matter to have all men in contention with us: this then is another reason hereof.

Thirdly, because it is enough to serve a mans turne for his unregenerate ends: for men having a naturall conscience, whereof they must stop the mouth, and it being injudicious, and not able to judge of the *power of godliness*, they are satisfied with the *forme*: as when Children are wayward and wrangling, because wee know they are not judicious, we give them Nutts, not gold or silver to still them, and it serves their turnes as well; so is it here in the naturall conscience, it doth judge the *forme* to be enough to carry a man to heaven; and who would doe more than he needs must?

Fourthly, because if men have but the *forme of godliness*, Satan troubles them not, nor the flesh: but when men labour for the *power of godlinesse*, and goe on any further than the *forme*, then Satan (knowing this will bring them to heaven) hath the power of hell against them, and hee keepes a great busseling with them to hinder them what hee can: and so doth the flesh too; but it will not resist the *forme*, for that will stand with a mans lusts; but if hee be divided against himselfe, hee cannot endure it; as to denie a friend or a stranger, if he be importunate, is a hard matter; but to denie a mans wife that lyes in his bosome, if shee be earnest, is more difficult; but to denie a mans selfe when he is importunate with himselfe, is most difficult; and yet this you must doe, if you have the *power* of it. Now to denie the

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power of it, is when it is laid open to men and offered, and they with ſtubbornneſſe of will reſiſt and denie it.

And ſo much for the opening of the words: now for the folding of them up againe, and firſt from the firſt, what *godlineſs* is,

Vſe 1. Let us learne not to deceive our ſelves, for it is not (as I told you) naturall or morall vertues only, no nor the doing of the actions of religion, a man making himſelfe his utmoſt ends thereof: content not your ſelves therefore with any thing that is not godlineſſe: let mee ſpeake unto you as *Peter* to the diſperſed brethren, where after that he had reckoned up many vertues, *patience*, *knowledge*, *temperance*, *&c.* he bids them add to all theſe *godlineſs*; as if hee had ſaid, all the reſt are not availeable unleſſe you have *godlineſs* alſo: ſee therefore that all theſe be *godlineſs*, that is, that they all come from God, and looke to him; for this is the nature of *godlineſs*, to come to the Wells head, and to ſearch higher than nature, to have another *Alpha* and *Omega* of all that is within us, or that comes from us, than what is within us of our ſelves. And then againe, if we be to preach to others, wee ſhould learne to preach Chriſt and God, that is, to enforce all as from them and to them; not only to exhort to morall vertues, with ſuch inſtructions as may be taken out of *Seneca* or *Plutarch* (though theſe have their uſe and place) but as out of the Scriptures, let Chriſt and God come in, and ſhew you how all doe come from God, and looke to God: and ſo all you that are hearers, be ſure all you doe be *godlineſs*, that is,

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comming from God, and tending to him: for motions have their denominations from their *terminus à quo*, and from their ends; as that is called *calefaction* that tends to *heat*: so is that truly *godlineſſe* that tends to *God*, and hath reſpect unto him. Art thou a Student? when thou ſtudieſt and takeſt paines in thy books, ſee whether thou do'ſt it for thy ſelfe or for thy credit, or doeſt thou make God thy utmoſt end? examine thy heart, and examine it narrowly: and ſo likewiſe you that are exerciſed in other Callings, doe you doe them that you may doe good to mankinde in them, as a ſervant that uſes his talent to his maſters ſervice? then is this *godlineſs*: ſo if you eat or drink, or recreate your ſelves, doe you doe it that you may doe good better, as men whet their ſythes that they may mowe the better? then this is alſo *godlineſs*, for it tends to God and *godlineſſe*.

But you will ſay, Doe you altogether condemne naturall and morall vertues? muſt they doe nothing? yes, you ſhall have this uſe of them, that they will help as winde to drive the ſhip; only it is *godlineſs* is the rudder that guides it, and aymes at the right haven: as for example, you are commanded to love your children, and your wives; you are bound to doe this, if you had no naturall affections in you; only having theſe affections in you, you doe it with more eaſe; elſe you muſt drive the ſhip with oares, whereas now the winde fills the ſailes, and you doe it with more facility and eaſe: and ſo likewiſe you are bound to be patient and meeke, and you muſt be ſo, though your natures

natures be not ſo; but if your natures be ſo, you may the more eaſily be ſo, yet ſo as *godlineſs* muſt ſet the Compaſſe, and ſteere the ſhip. Morall vertues are like good horſes, that draw the Chariot, but *godlineſs* is the *Auriga*, the *Coachman*; without which, take the moſt excellent things that nature is capable of, if it be not guided by it, the Lord regards them not; for God regards nothing but that which drawes the creatures unto him; but now *morall vertues* makes us reſt upon our owne bottomes, and ſo likewiſe all things whatſoever they be that beautifie the fleſh; for God will have *no fleſh to glory in it ſelfe; but let him that glories, glory in the Lord.* Nay, I add more, take the graces of the ſpirit, wherewith God adornes his Saints, as an husband doth his wife with Jewels, if you magnifie them, you doe ſo much withdraw your hearts from God: therefore in heaven it is ſaid there is neither Sunne, nor Moone; now what is that? there is no excellencie in any creature that is magnified there, but God is all in all, hee is Sunne and Moone: and therefore in the *Revelation* of Saint *John* it is ſaid, and ſaid to their honour, it is made their worth that they give all to God; *Glory and power be to our God for ever*; they fall on their faces, throw down their crownes, though created glorious creatures. When the evill Angels began to reflect upon themſelves, it was their ruine, they fell from God: for the creature of it ſelfe is like a glaſſe without a bottom; if it commeth to ſtand upon its owne bottome, it falls, and breakes; and ſo the Angels when they would ſtand of themſelves, they fell downe to the

1 Cor. 1. 29. 30

Rev. 7. 12.

loweſt pit: and therefore of all graces, labour for emptying graces, as Faith and Love; for theſe give all unto God, nothing to mans ſelfe; and therefore they are the great graces in religion, which you muſt chiefly labour for.

Vſe 2. Secondly, from that there is a *power* in *godlineſſe*, if it be ſuch a powerfull thing (as you have heard it is) then this may ſerve to comfort us in the wayes of it. Whereſoever it is in truth, there it is *in power*: ſay that thou haſt ſuch a light that thou canſt not beleeve, that there be ſuch roades as that thou canſt not walk by them, yet if thou haſt *godlineſſe*, thou ſhalt be able to overcome; for *the kingdome of God conſiſts in power*. When God commeth to dwell in any mans heart, hee ſendeth godlineſſe into it, which rules in it as a King in his Kingdome; think therefore of it as of Monarchs as *Alexander* was, or thoſe which *Daniel* ſpeaketh of, it carries all before it, it bringeth every thought into ſubjection: and therefore alſo the Spirit is called a *ſpirit of power*; and if you have *godlineſſe*, it commeth from the ſpirit, and therefore is accompanied with power; and therfore Chriſt is ſaid to be *full of the holy Ghoſt*, and of *power*; and ſo *Stephen*, and *John* the *Baptiſt*; And grace is ſaid to be a *powerfull* thing: *Be ſtrong in the grace of God, and in the Power of his might*.

Now, the reaſon why godlines hath *power*, is, becauſe *God* hath put vertue into it: As when you ſee ſuch and ſuch an hearb have ſuch a vertue in it to doe ſuch and ſuch a thing, it is becauſe God hath endued it with ſuch a power; and ſo hath he done with godlineſſe. If therefore thou haſt any thing

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to doe in religion, ſet on it; Haſt thou any luſt to overcome? ſet on it, and let mee ſpeake to thee as hee ſpake to *Gideon*, *Goe on thou valiant man in the might of the Lord.* The people of *Iſrael* travelling to the land of *Canaan*, ſaw the Cities walled to heaven, and that the Gyants were there, the ſonnes of *Anak*; yet *Joſhua* biddeth them be of good comfort, and feare not, for the Lord would fight for them, and *deliver their adverſaries into their hands*: ſo, though you ſee difficulties in the way to heaven: yet godlineſſe is a powerfull thing that will carrie you through all: therefore likewiſe the Apoſtle having prayed for the Epheſians, that they might *not faint at his tribulations for them, which was their glory*, but that they might *be ſtrengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man, to comprehend with all Saints, the breadth, and length, and depth, and height, and to know the love of Chriſt which paſſeth knowledge*; which becauſe they might think they ſhould never be able to do, he addeth, *To him that is able to do above all that we can aske or think, according to the power that worketh in us, be all glory*: as if hee ſhould have ſaid, God is able to doe it, and that by the power which worketh in him; ſo ſuppoſe to ſubdue ſome luſt of the fleſh, be a thing ſo hard as you think it wil never be done; nay, you conceive it to be a thing ſo improbable as that you are aſham'd to ask it: yet, *according to that power which worketh in us, he is able to doe above all we ask or think*: and therfore he prayeth *that their eyes may be opened, that they may ſee the greatneſſe of the power that wrought in them*; and it was not that they might ſee and look at it idly, but for the uſe to ſerve their

Eph. 3. 13, &c.

Ver. 20 21.

Eph. 1. 19.

turnes, that they laying hold of it, and using of it, might be able to doe these things which they desire should be done, even such things to which a mans nature is as untoward as water is to heat when there is none in it: only, as Christ said to *Mary, Beleeve and you shall see the power of God*; thou must goe to God for it by faith, and God will shew it forth unto you, and you shall have fruits of it. The end of faith is not only to apply the holy promises of justification, but of sanctification also: as for example, he hath promised to baptize you *with the holy Ghost and with fire*, that is, with zeale & other graces of the spirit, which must give them power and strength; and all, that *sinne might not raigne in their mortall bodies*. Goe to God then and urge him with his promise, and hee cannot denie you. When men therefore think to excuse themselves by saying, I am not able to doe such a thing, what will you have me to do? it is no excuse: for if they were but willing, it is all he requireth of them; the *power*, that belongeth to God; which if men would but beleeve, and go to him, he would undoubtedly give it them.

I therefore now ask thee, Wouldst thou turne to God? Wouldst thou overcome such and such a lust of uncleanneſſe, drunkenneſſe? &c. be it what it will be: if thou answer, No; then thou art justly condemned, thy blood be upon thy owne head: but if thou sayest, Yes, thou wouldst; then come but to God, be resolute to be religious in good earnest, and I will assure thee, hee will vouchsafe thee power to doe it. The Apostle saith, that God *would confirme them unto the end, that they might be blameleſſe in*

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the day of the Lord Jeſus; for, ſaith he, *God is faithfull*, he hath *ſaid*, he hath *promiſed* it, hee ſhall break his word if he do not: let me reaſon it a little with you; Is it not an acceptable requeſt to goe to God with all thy heart, and to ſay, Lord, I deſire but the *power* and *ſtrength* to goe through with thy owne work? Do'ſt thou think hee will not heare thee? Remember Chriſt, the only Phyſician, how ready he was to heale men of their bodily diſeaſes when they came unto him; and hee hath not put off his nature now: Do'ſt thou think the power of his death & reſurrection were but fancies, or a notion? If not, goe on and feare not; for as God ſaid to *Joſhua*, ſo ſhalt thou finde him to deale with thee, *I will never leave thee, nor forſake thee.*

And ſo leaving what I have ſaid, to your further conſideration, I come to a third uſe, that ſeeing godlineſſe is ſuch a powerfull thing as you have ſeene, therefore you would take heed how you deceive your ſelves with fond deſires and purpoſes, that have no power, no force in them, ſo as to think that they will ſerve the turne; no nor yet a few feeble faint endeavours. I ſay to men that ſet on religious courſes without having their hearts changed, as Chriſt ſaid unto his Diſciples, *Tarrie yee in the Citie, till yee be endued with power from on high*: as if our Saviour Chriſt ſhould have ſaid, If yee goe preſently into the world, yee will not be able to goe through with your works; ſtay therefore with faſting and prayer till you have received power from on high to carrie you through: for new purpoſes in a man that returnes to his old nature, are like *new wine in*

Vſe 3.

Luk. 24. 49.

old vessells, they will break the vessells and be too bigge for your hearts: it is therefore enough to take up now a purpose, and begin to be diligent in your Calling or sanctifying the Sabbath; for, it is impossible these purposes should live in an hart that is carnall: for, as the soyle must be sutable to every creature, or else it will not live; so likewise you will never be able to performe these purposes.

How to get the power of godlinesse.

In the first place therefore labour to get new hearts, as the bottome of these purposes, which may be as the root to give sap to them; for then they will live and grow in you, when there is a soyle to sute with them.

Secondly, get power in beleeving. Christ our Saviour, when he came unto his Country, it is said, *He would not put forth his power to work many miracles there*: Why so? one would have thought hee should rather have wrought them there than any where else, both for his owne honour, and the good of his Country-men; no place then was fitter for that than it: yet there he works few or none, and the reason was, *because of their unbeliefe, they beleeved not*: so that it is the want of faith that holds Gods hands from strengthening you; you will not (I say) beleeve God, who hath sworn (and it is not an idle oath) that hee would grant that wee should *serve him in godlinesse and holinesse all the dayes of our life*. When the widow came to Christ to be healed of the issue which she had many years, it is said that *vertue went out of him to heale her, because she beleeved*: and though it have bin a disease of never so many yeares, yet if he say, *Be ye whole*, it is no matter what the

the diſeaſe is, ſo God be the Phyſician; and therefore beleeve.

Thirdly, pray, and furniſh your ſelves with all the graces of the ſpirit: not only goe about things, but maintaine a ſtock, fill the ciſterne every day within, whet and point the graces of God in you; for the inward man every day is ſubject to decay, as well as the outward man: and doe not take ayme at your ſelves, or at your ſtrength, when you are in a good mood, or by the preſent temper; for it vaniſhes if there be not a ſupply from day to day from grace within, if you doe not whet your ſoules every day.

Fourthly and laſtly, if this be true, that many are partakers of the *forme* that have not the *power* of godlineſſe; that when we come to looke on the faces of our Churches, we finde the *forme* in many: but if we come unto their dealings and carriages in private, ye ſhall ſcarce finde the *power* (it's as rare, as the other is frequent;) in their profeſſion indeed there is a *forme*, but yet ye ſhall finde religious ſervants as idle as others, and wives as ſtubborne as others, husbands and maſters as like Lyons in their families, and as falſe in their dealings as others: if this be true (I ſay) as it is too true, then *be not deceived, God is not mocked*, but try and examine your ſelves herein; for the Kingdome of God conſiſts not in *word* but in *power*: the Lord will not judge you according to your intentions and purpoſes, but according to your works; and it's not he that ſaith, *Lord, Lord, ſhall inherit the kingdome of heaven, but hee that doth the will of my Father, &c.* Be not then children in *Vſe 4.*

in understanding for to take counters for gold, lay not out your money for counterfeit things, be not fooles to take paines, and yet not have your turnes served. Let me speake unto you as *James* doth, *If you say yee have faith, and not works, can your faith save you?* I say, if you have the *forme* of godlines, and not the *power*, will that save you? if you would not be deceived then, examine your selves.

Five marks whereby to know whether wee have the power of godlinesse or no.

First of all, if thou dost more than nature: see that thou beest not the same man thou wast, that thou standest not up in the same troupe thou didst; if thou dost, thou hast no more but the *forme* of godlinesse in thee; for if thou hadst, it would turne thy nature, and add wings unto thee, making thee soare higher than nature: *I am able through Christ that strengthens me*, and that, not to doe some things, but *all things*. He sayes not, I doe purpose or desire, *but, I am able to doe all things, &c.* Those therefore that are able to stand against some lusts that are against their dispositions, but not against all, are weake, and have not this power in them. It may be thou art able to serve God when thou art poore, but what art thou when the world comes in upon thee? thou art able to abstaine from sinnes by nature, but godlinesse (as wee say of Physick) helps when nature failes: and as a naturall man with his sight sees farre, but with an Optick glasse sees further; so when nature falls short, Art helps: as though by nature a man may measure or count, yet if he comes to a large piece of ground, or a great summe, Art is required: so though thou mayest doe many things by nature, yet when godlinesse comes,

comes, it helps out in things wherein nature failes: as *Sampſon* could doe many ordinary things by his owne ſtrength; but when hee came to take downe or carrie away the gates of a Citie, and to pull downe an houſe, it is ſtill ſaid, *The ſpirit of the Lord came upon him, the Lord went with him*; and even ſo it is here.

Secondly, examine whether ye be godly in truth or no; for in Chriſt there are ſaid to be *dead branches* as well as *living*, that is, thoſe that have the *forme* as well as thoſe that have the *power*: but how are they diſtinguiſhed? the dead beare no fruit; and therefore as *John* ſaid, *Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit*, God puts the *axe* to it: and ſo the three grounds did not bring forth fruit. Examine therefore your ſelves whether ye be full of fruit or no, whether ye abound in good duties or no, and doe them with an honeſt heart, for thereby the fourth ground is diſtinguiſhed from all the reſt. John 15 2.

Thirdly, examine whether ye hold out in time of triall or not, whether you are able *to approve your ſelves with joy*, as the Apoſtle ſayes of himſelfe, that he did *when he was in trouble on every ſide*, on the right hand and on the left, in proſperity and in adverſity. The third ground held not out in temptation; and the reaſon was, *becauſe they had not depth of earth*, that is, they wanted *power*, and an inward ſtock of *grace*, for that is *depth of earth*: as a man that keeps a great houſe, if he have not a ſtock able to ſupply him, he will ſoone prove bankrupt; and for a trades-man (as yee ſay) if he be not diligent in his trade, and follow it well, and make his returnes, he will ſoon

breake; ſo alſo when a man wants inward *power*, and an inward ſtock of graces to beare his daily expences out, he will ſoone become bankrupt.

Fourthly, every grace hath ſome property annexed to it, which doth diſtinguiſh and difference it from counterfeit, as in *faith unfained, laborious love, patient hope*, and the like.

Thirdly, take heed leſt ſome luſt overcome all, and ſo luſt overtop all, and be predominant, as the praiſe of men, or a reſpect of pleaſure; as an Hawk (you ſee) though ſhee may ſoare and flie high, yet ſhe will have an eye to the prey below; and ſo have hypocrites. See therefore that ye ſerve God *in ſingleneſſe of heart*, and not *with eye-ſervice*, that you doe not harbour any luſt within, for that will ſpoile all at laſt: as weeds in a garden, if they be let alone, and not plucked up, will over-runne the hearbs; ſo is it with ſinne, if it be ſuffered, though it be but a little one at firſt, yet it will like a leproſie over-ſpread the whole man: and therefore looke to that, that ſome luſt doe not overcome all in the end.

And ſo I end for this text and time.

FINIS.